

Argon Laser Trabeculoplasty (ALT) or Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) Information for patients

What is Argon Laser Trabeculoplasty or Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty?

These are laser treatments for **primary open-angle glaucoma**, that are administered in order to reduce the intraocular pressure (IOP). Both of these treatments are designed to improve the function of the drainage channels in the eye to allow better outflow through the natural channels. These are **outpatient procedures**, given in the eye clinic.

Some people respond well to these treatments but some, unfortunately, do not respond at all. It is not possible to predict who is going to have a good response and who won't.

- **Argon Laser Trabeculoplasty (ALT)**

Usually, half the fluid channels are treated first. If necessary, the other fluid channels can be treated in a separate session at a later date. In many cases, medication will still be needed after this procedure. ALT can be repeated 2 or 3 times.

- **Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT)**

The laser is designed to treat specific areas 'selectively', leaving untreated areas intact. For this reason, SLT may be safely repeated. SLT may be an alternative for those who have been treated unsuccessfully with ALT (or vice-versa).

Before the ALT or SLT treatment

Before undergoing treatment, you will see the doctor who will carry it out; they need to confirm that you understand the risks and benefits of the treatment and obtain your written consent.

The ALT and SLT treatment procedure

Both the ALT and SLT laser machines look very similar to the slit lamp microscope that is used to examine your eyes in the clinic. Before treatment, a nurse will check your vision, check for any allergies and administer an eye drop to reduce the size of the pupil of the eye to be treated. Some people find that this makes the eye ache a little, but this wears off.

Then the doctor will call you into the treatment room and will administer a local anaesthetic eye drop. You will then be settled at the laser machine, with your chin on the rest and your forehead against the band as usual. At this point a magnifying contact lens will be placed on the surface of your eye to give the doctor a good view of its drainage structures. This lens needs a small amount of a sticky eye drop to help protect your eye. You may feel this sticky drop running down your cheek. The doctor will position the contact lens to obtain a good view, then start the treatment.

The laser makes very little clicking noises and flashes a little. Almost everyone finds the procedure to be pain free. It takes about 10 to 20 minutes and may be completed in one or two sessions on different days.

After the ALT or SLT treatment

You might be asked to stay in the department for an hour or more, in order for the doctor to check the IOP.

Some doctors prefer to prescribe a short course of anti-inflammatory drops to use after the treatment. These drops and how to use them will be explained to you at the time.

You are likely to be asked to continue using your normal glaucoma eye drops after the procedure if you already do so.

Once you are allowed home you can perform all your usual activities, although **you must not drive for the rest of the day**. You will be sent a follow-up appointment to check whether the treatment has worked.

What are the benefits of the procedure?

If the treatment is successful it may reduce the pressure in your eye(s). This reduction in the pressure may slow the progression of your glaucoma, thus helping preserve peripheral vision.

What are the risks of the procedure?

- The main risk is that the treatment may not reduce the pressure (1 in 10) or that your glaucoma may continue to get worse even though the procedure was successful. The effects of both treatments can take several weeks to develop.
- Although usually successful, there is a chance that the effect will wear off and that the pressure in your eyes may rise again requiring further treatment. ALT and SLT can be repeated if necessary.
- The pressure in your eye may actually go up after the procedure (3.4% post ALT and 4.5% post SLT). This may need extra treatment, including surgery in a small number of cases.
- The treatment may cause inflammation in the eye (symptoms of glare in bright light), may occasionally cause a small bleed in the front of the eye (which should settle within a few days) and may cause some blurring of vision for a few hours post procedure. These symptoms wear off within a few days.

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

Maidstone Hospital Eye Clinic (9.00am – 5.00pm)

☎ 01622 226202

☎ 01622 226228 (answerphone)

☎ 01622 729000

For out of hours ring

Ask for the on-call eye doctor or go to your nearest A&E department.

NHS 111

☎ 111

NHS Choices online

www.nhs.uk

Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have.

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Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

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